

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims reflects all claim amendments and replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Material to be inserted is in **bold and underline**, and material to be deleted is in ~~strikeout~~ or (if the deletion is of five or fewer consecutive characters or would be difficult to see) in double brackets [[]].

1. (Canceled)

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently amended) A car top carrier comprising:

a box having a lid and a bottom,

a clamp device configured to attach the bottom of the box to a pair of crossbars on top of a car,

one or more hinge devices releaseably connecting the lid to the bottom, each hinge having a first portion secured to the lid, and a second portion secured to the bottom, the hinge being configured to permit pivotal rotation of the lid along an edge portion of the bottom, and being provided with a release mechanism so that the hinge device can also function as a latch allowing separation of the first and second portions of the hinge device, wherein the hinge device automatically snaps into engagement when the first portion is urged toward the second portion, one of the first and second portions having a catch, the other portion having an enlarged structure configured for receipt by the catch, [[and]] wherein the catch is spring biased toward a closed position which permits entry of the enlarged structure into the catch but does not allow exit of the enlarged structure from the catch without manipulation, **and wherein the catch includes a spring that urges the enlarged structure to disengage when the catch is manipulated to an open position.**

4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently amended) A car top carrier comprising:

a box having a lid and a bottom,

a clamp device configured to attach the bottom of the box to a pair of crossbars on top of a car,

one or more hinge devices releaseably connecting the lid to the bottom, each hinge having a first portion secured to the lid, and a second portion secured to the bottom, the hinge being configured to permit pivotal rotation of the lid along an edge portion of the bottom, and being provided with a release mechanism so that the hinge device can also function as a latch allowing separation of the first and second portions of the hinge device, wherein the hinge device automatically snaps into engagement when the first portion is urged toward the second portion in a closing direction, one of the first and second portions having a catch including a pawl mounted for rotational movement around an axis perpendicular to the closing direction, and the other portion having an enlarged structure configured for receipt by the catch, and wherein the pawl can be pushed aside by the enlarged structure upon entry but not upon exit of the catch.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently amended) A car top carrier comprising:

a box having a lid and a bottom,

a clamp device configured to attach the bottom of the box to a pair of crossbars on top of a car,

one or more hinge devices releasably connecting the lid to the bottom, each hinge having a first portion secured to the lid, and a second portion secured to the bottom, the hinge being configured to permit pivotal rotation of the lid along an edge portion of the bottom, and being provided with a release mechanism so that the hinge device can also function as a latch allowing separation of the first and second portions of the hinge device in a release direction, wherein one of the first and second portions has a catch including a pawl mounted for rotational movement around an axis perpendicular to the release direction and being ~~[[that is]]~~ spring biased toward a constricted-passage position, and the other portion has an enlarged structure configured for receipt by the catch, and further wherein the pawl can be pushed aside by the enlarged structure upon entry but not upon exit of the catch, and wherein the catch is spring biased toward a closed position which permits entry of the enlarged structure into the catch but does not allow exit of the enlarged structure from the catch without manipulation.

8. (Currently amended) A car top carrier comprising:

a box having a lid and a bottom,

a clamp device configured to attach the bottom of the box to a pair of crossbars on top of a car,

one or more hinge devices releasably connecting the lid to the bottom, each hinge having a first portion secured to the lid, and a second portion secured to the bottom, the hinge being configured to permit pivotal rotation of the lid along an edge portion of the bottom, and being provided with a release mechanism so that the hinge device can also function as a latch allowing separation of the first and second portions of the hinge device in a release direction, wherein one of the first and second portions has a catch including a pawl mounted for rotational movement around an axis perpendicular to the release direction that is spring biased toward a constricted-passage position, and the other portion has an enlarged structure configured for receipt by the catch, and further wherein the pawl can be pushed aside by the enlarged structure upon entry but not upon exit of the catch, and wherein the enlarged structure is substantially spherical so that the hinge device permits the first and second portions to be mounted on various lid and bottom shapes.

9. (Currently amended) A car top carrier comprising:

a box having a lid and a bottom,

a clamp device configured to attach the bottom of the box to a pair of crossbars on top of a car,

one or more hinge devices releasably connecting the lid to the bottom, each hinge having a first portion secured to the lid, and a second portion secured to the bottom, the hinge being configured to permit pivotal rotation of the lid along an edge portion of the bottom, and being provided with a release mechanism so that the hinge device can also function as a latch allowing separation of the first and second portions of the hinge device in a release direction, wherein one of the first and second portions has a catch including a pawl mounted for rotational movement around an axis perpendicular to the release direction and being ~~[[that is]]~~ spring biased toward a constricted-passage position, and the other portion has an enlarged structure configured for receipt by the catch, and further wherein the pawl can be pushed aside by the enlarged structure upon

entry but not upon exit of the catch, and wherein the catch is provided with a spring that urges the enlarged structure to disengage when the catch is manipulated to an open position.

10. (Previously presented) The carrier of claim 7 further comprising first and second lid supports, each lid support connecting the lid to the bottom.

11. (Previously presented) The carrier of claim 10, wherein each lid support includes a slider mounted on a spring, and a cam slidably contacting the slider so that the lid support assists in opening and closing the lid.

12. (Previously presented) The carrier of claim 7, wherein the first portion has the enlarged structure and the second portion has the catch.

13. (Previously presented) The carrier of claim 7, wherein the first portion has the catch and the second portion has the enlarged position.

14. (Previously presented) The carrier of claim 7, wherein the second portion has a receptacle with a flared lip allowing a limited amount of hinge rotation.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) A car top carrier comprising:

a box having a lid and a bottom,

a clamp device configured to attach the bottom of the box to a pair of crossbars on top of a car,

one or more hinge devices releaseably connecting the ~~lid~~ to the bottom, each hinge having a first portion secured to the lid, and a second portion secured to the bottom, the hinge being configured to permit pivotal rotation of the lid along an edge portion of the bottom, and being provided with a release mechanism so that the hinge device can also function as a latch allowing separation of the first and second portions of the hinge device, wherein the hinge device automatically snaps into engagement when the first portion is urged toward the second portion, the first and second portions being configured to permit relative rotation around at least two axes, and wherein the clamp device includes at least one cam lever positioned inside the box for opening and closing the clamp device securely around a crossbar.